

Good morning. My name is Marilyn Cotton. I am a birth mother. After a 5 month stay in a Salvation Army Home, I gave birth to my daughter in April of 1966. I was able to see her for just a moment. My mother and I looked through the glass and there she was, way in the back. But I could see a lot of brown, curly hair. My Mom saw her first grandchild. They told me I would forget her, I would forget any of this had ever happened.

I did not see my daughter again until the summer of 2007. Her name is Julie. She was 41 years old. I missed a lot. She missed a lot. I missed her first step, her first tooth, her first day at school. She missed the birth of her brother and her sister. I missed her wedding. She missed the weddings of her brother and her sister.

Recently, at my son's second wedding I had the chance to introduce Julie to our friends and family. It came as a bit of a shock to them but they were all welcoming and happy that I had looked for her and found her.

There is a lot of catching up to do. She asks a lot of questions. She wants to know things about our family, things that may have been passed along to her and her children. Her oldest son looks a lot like his Dad. Her daughter looks much like her but the other son looks like no

one in the family. He has always wondered who he looks like. So story goes like this. When I found my birth family, my sister made a scrapbook for me with lots of family pictures and family history. So, I made one for Julie. I included pictures of my birth family as they are her family. When they were looking at it, her son, who was 8, saw a picture of his Great Uncle, my brother at the age of 8. He said, "Hey! that is who I look like". And he did, right down to the plaid shirt. We all need an identity. We need to have roots, someplace to be from. We need our history, people to indentify with. Julie now has that but there is one thing missing. A piece of paper. A paper that validates who she was and where she came from. She has a birth certificate that says she is Julie. But that is chapter 2. We all want to start with chapter 1. She, like all of us, wants to start at the beginning. Her beginning. You each have your birth certificate. It is yours. It does not belong to your Mother nor your Father. We want ours. It's a simple as that. There is a lot of talk about promises made. That didn't happen. Who are we being protected from. Our children? I realize this session is almost over but please send a message to those that may come after you here. This bill is worth a yes vote. Please put us and the rest of the closed era of adoptees on equal footing with you and the rest of the citizens of Michigan. Please give us our original birth certificates. Thank you.